12 Surprising Signs You'll Live to 100

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Introduction

We all want to live a long life. But let’s face it, old age isn’t always fun. Who wants to get old if it means dragging yourself through the day without energy and vitality, or worse, crippled by disability and disease?

When it comes to our body's aging, how quickly we age, and even how we age is not just left to Father Time.

It is well known that healthy lifestyle habits equal healthy aging.

In fact, **lifestyle factors play as much of a role in determining your long-term health as where your ball landed in the fickle roulette of genetic makeup, perhaps even greater.** Adopting healthier habits can even reverse serious diseases like heart disease.

In other words, where we end up on the bell curve of health and well-being versus disease and disability is, **to a large extent, under our control,** barring, of course, the intervention of fate.

Planning for a healthy tomorrow is like saving for retirement; if you put a little money aside consistently every year, you will reap big rewards over the long term.

The same can be said for your daily health habits. Every time you choose that apple over a candy bar, every little choice is like putting pennies in a piggy bank.

Making those small decisions for health adds up over time; by the time you reach your seventies, you'll see the results big time.

Are you likely to become a centenarian?

If you have good genes, eat your fruits and veggies, eat enough protein, exercise regularly, and get enough rest, your odds of living a long, healthy life are much greater. **However, there are many, many other factors that come into play in determining your life span.**

Here are **12 surprising signs** that you'll live to 100. Most of these involve health habits that are easy to adopt, and they are a great way to increase the odds that you'll not just live to a ripe age of 100 but enjoy the ride as well.

1. You Floss Your Teeth

Flossing isn't just good for preventing periodontal disease; it may prevent heart attacks and strokes. Inflammation is a significant factor in clogging the arteries that lead to strokes and heart attacks. **Researchers think the bacterial infection of gum disease may spread through the bloodstream and contribute to inflammation in other parts of the body.** Intensive treatments for periodontitis (gum disease), which reduce inflammation in the mouth, will improve the arteries.

Preventing gum disease through regular flossing **may also lower your risk of diabetes** and all its many undesirable complications. For example, gum disease is associated with greater insulin resistance, a precursor of Type 2 diabetes. Flossing also helps reduce your susceptibility to respiratory illnesses like bronchitis and emphysema by decreasing the number of disease-causing organisms in the mouth.

Flossing may even help keep your mind sharp. People with gum disease have been found to have worse mental functioning, according to a UK study of 6,693 adults in their twenties to seventies. **The reason may be that system-wide inflammation caused by gum disease damages the white matter in the brain, impairing mental function.** Other studies have found that the elderly with gum disease are more prone to have cognitive impairment or develop Alzheimer's disease.

2.You Still Have Your Appendix

The appendix has long been considered to be little more than a useless remnant from our prehistoric ancestors. **Well, not so fast.** Researchers now believe that the appendix may serve a vital function as a storehouse for good intestinal bacteria needed to recolonize the gut with good bacteria after a case of diarrhea. The appendix may also play a role in the formation of white blood cells needed for immune functioning.

Having friendly bacteria in your gut is critical because these are needed for everything from digesting and absorbing many types of carbohydrates, helping in the production of vitamins K and B, promoting mineral absorption, and aiding in the breakdown of toxins. Having helpful bacteria in your gut also helps prevent allergies, and they support the immune system by aiding in the production of antibodies.

Of course, if your appendix becomes inflamed, there may be no alternative other than to remove it, since failing to do so could be fatal. **If you've lost your appendix, don't despair. You can still stack the aging odds in your favor by using a high-quality probiotic to make sure your intestinal flora stays balanced and healthy.** And, even if you still have your appendix, regular intake of probiotics is a great tonic for longevity.

3.You Have a Flat Belly, Even After 45

The shifting hormones in midlife predispose both men and women to weight gain. For most people, the extra weight settles in the middle. Having a "spare tire" around the abdomen is one of the symptoms associated with metabolic syndrome, a group of symptoms linked to the development of heart disease, stroke, and Type 2 diabetes.

Other symptoms of metabolic syndrome include insulin resistance, high blood pressure, low HDL cholesterol (the good type), and high triglycerides (a type of blood fat).

In one study by the National Institute of Aging, women with extra weight around the middle were 20 percent more likely to die sooner; the effect remained even for people whose body mass index was normal.

How much extra weight around the waist is too much? For women, if your waist measures more than 35 inches, and for men, 40 inches or more, you may be at higher risk for metabolic syndrome.

The good news is that the symptoms associated with metabolic syndrome respond remarkably well to simple lifestyle changes: get plenty of exercise, avoid processed foods, eat a diet rich in protein, fruit and vegetables, and emphasize healthy fats while avoiding trans fats.

4.You Can Touch Your Toes

Could your risk of heart disease and stroke be related to your **ability to touch your toes when sitting down?** It may sound strange, but research indicates that flexibility in the body may be related to flexibility of the arteries and thereby to cardiovascular health.

One study published in the American Journal of Physiology indicated that among people 40 years and older, **the ability to bend over in a sitting position and touch your toes might be correlated with the risk for heart attack or stroke.**

Inability to perform this simple task could mean that your arteries have lost flexibility and become stiff and rigid. Healthy arteries are flexible and elastic, which helps keep blood pressure normal.

Age-related stiffening of the arteries is a precursor of the loss of arterial integrity, which leads to high blood pressure, a propensity to develop blood clots in the linking of the arteries, and possibly stroke and heart attack.

The study included 526 healthy, non-smoking, normal-weight adults between 20 to 83 years old. Participants were asked to perform what the researchers called a **sit-and-reach test:** Sitting on the floor with their back against the wall and their legs straight,

participants reached their arms forward by bending at the waist. Based on how far towards their toes they could reach, study participants were then classified as poor-or high-flexibility.

The flexibility scores were then correlated with participants' blood pressure, cardio-respiratory fitness, and the speed with which pulse beats traveled through the body. The researchers found that trunk flexibility predicted artery stiffness in middle age and older participants, but not in younger participants.

Among the middle age and older participants, systolic blood pressure (the peak pressure that occurs as the heart contracts) was higher in people with poor flexibility than in the high-flexibility group.

Why would arterial flexibility be related to the flexibility of the body as we get older? One reason, the researchers speculate, is that stretching starts a physiological chain reaction, which slows down or counteracts age-related arterial stiffening. In addition, muscles are made flexible by collagen and elastin. When the production of these is stimulated through stretches, it may also keep arteries flexible, in turn reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke.

So, can yoga stretches and other types of flexibility training counteract the arterial stiffening that precedes heart disease and stroke? The researchers believe so.

They point to another recent study of middle age and older adults who **improved the flexibility of their carotids after engaging in a regular stretch exercise program.** The carotid artery is a major artery found in the neck and one of the main arteries involved in stroke.

"The findings suggest a possibility that improving flexibility induced by the stretching exercise may be capable of modifying age-related arterial stiffening in middle-aged and older adults," said Dr. Yamamoto, one of the researchers. *"We believe that flexibility exercise, such as stretching, yoga, and Pilates, should be integrated as a new recommendation into the known cardiovascular benefits of regular exercise."*

5. You Stand Up Straight

Poor posture doesn't just make you look older; it predisposes you to a host of health problems down the road. As we get older, a seriously rounded back, a.k.a. hyperkyphosis or dowager's hump, contributes to almost every age-related issue you don't want.

People with a hyperkyphotic bad posture are more likely to suffer fractures of the hip, leg, wrist, shoulder, and arm; the more hunched the back, the greater the risk. The risk of fractures is independent of bone mass density, meaning that hyperkyphosis is a separate risk factor for fractures, on par with osteoporosis.

The rounded back also puts pressure on the chest and lung cavity, causing shortness of breath. In the elderly, shortness of breath is linked to a host of health issues, including increased anxiety and depression, reduced happiness, increased risk of cardiovascular or lung disease, and Type 2 diabetes.

Not surprisingly, the elderly with a forward-hunched posture have higher levels of mortality, as much as 44% higher, according to one study.

Once developed, hyperkyphosis is hard to reverse, **so prevention is your best bet.** Although, according to recent studies, **yoga exercises for back pain and back health may be useful in reversing hyperkyphosis, even in people over 70.**

6.You Can Stand on One Foot with Your Eyes Closed

Our sense of balance deteriorates as we get older. In the elderly, poor balance is a leading risk factor for falls resulting in hip fractures. In older people, hip fractures are generally not caused by a traumatic event like a traffic accident or a serious fall; they result from minimal trauma, such as tripping because of poor balance. Fracturing the hip is a big deal when you get older. In the best case, it seriously affects your ability to take care of yourself; in the worst cases, it leads to death. **As much as one in three elderly men die within one year after sustaining a hip fracture; for women, the risk is somewhat lower, but still almost one in five.**

To test your balance, try standing on one foot with your eyes closed. If you can stand for 30 seconds or longer, your balance is great. Fifteen seconds is okay; less than that is a sign that you need to engage in exercises that help you improve your balance.

7.You Don’t Snore

If you snore almost every night, you may suffer from obstructive sleep apnea, a disorder in which you stop breathing for short periods of time. Sleep apnea doesn't just make you feel tired and exhausted during the day; it is linked to high blood pressure, memory problems, weight gain, mood swings and depression, and increased risk of car accidents.

Sleep apnea ups the risk of heart attacks and stroke considerably; in one study, almost three-quarters of male stroke victims suffered from sleep apnea. A longitudinal study following people over 18 years found that people without obstructive sleep apnea were three times more likely to live longer than those with severe apnea.

Sleep apnea is much more common than most people realize; in one study of adult men, **24% suffered from sleep apnea.** The risk is increased if you are overweight or suffer from high blood pressure.

8.You Are Never (or Rarely) in a Hurry

Forget about the swine flu epidemic; the real epidemic is one we rarely hear about: **hurry disease.** Hurry disease affects a majority of the adult population and claims millions of lives. According to Dr. Gershon Lesser, a cardiologist at the University of Southern California, **hurry disease is a real pathological entity that contributes to numerous illnesses, including colds, flu, and those stress-related heart attacks that often strike as early as in people's fifties or sixties.**

The symptoms? Rushing on your way to work, rushing to get things done at work, rushing to a meeting, rushing to lunch and back to work, rushing back home in the evening; physicians refer to this chronic sense of time pressure as time urgency.

Impatience is epidemic among multitasking Americans. More than half the adult population report that they regularly experience significant stress and have too little time to get the eight hours of sleep needed for good health and optimum performance.

Time urgency impatience **takes its toll on our health.** It puts us under a chronic sense

of stress, with all the health-undermining effects that entails. **It weakens the immune system; it has been associated with a nearly twofold increase in high blood pressure, and it is a key feature of the heart attack prone Type A personality.** Being under chronic mental stress (including a sense of time urgency) has also been observed to increase the risk of heart attack and stroke, and the chance of dying from these.

In short, a sobering reminder for all of us frenzied, harried, hurry-itis sufferers: **it's time to hurry up and smell those roses!**

9.You Spend Time in the Sun Almost Every Day

Too much time in the sun may increase your risk of skin cancer, but spending too little time in the sun isn't good either. You need regular sun exposure to keep healthy levels of vitamin D in your body.

The interest in vitamin D has increased tremendously over the last few years. Vitamin D functions as more than a vitamin; it is thought to be a "prehormone," which impacts the adrenal hormones, enzyme production, and cell growth. Some health professionals believe that optimizing your levels of vitamin D through sun exposure **may be one of the most important physical steps you can take to improve your long- term health.** Low levels of vitamin D are associated with numerous health risks, **including osteoporosis, diabetes, and multiple sclerosis. Vitamin D deficiency also increases the risk of heart disease and heart attacks.** Vitamin D produced via sunlight is thought to help heart health by increasing the body's natural anti-inflammatory defense and preventing calcification of blood vessels.

Vitamin D is toxic in too high doses when taken through supplements, but not when created naturally through exposure to sunlight. **(If you exercise in the sun, don't shower immediately after, as vitamin D is oil-soluble and some of the vitamin D formed in your skin could get washed off.** Allow time to cool down and let your body absorb the vitamin D.)

If you use sunscreen, stay in the sun for 15-20 minutes before applying the sunscreen. In the springtime, start with ten minutes of sun exposure and work up from there. In the winter, when not enough sunlight penetrates the atmosphere, supplement your vitamin D intake with a high-quality cod liver oil.

10. You Snapchat or Play Wordle

Okay, so you don't have to embrace every single new social media trend or game fad to live a long life, but learning new things does help. Learning a new language, learning to dance, or exposing yourself to other new types of learning helps keep brain cells young and healthy.

Activities that help keep you socially engaged, such as staying connected to family and friends and involved in current events are beneficial because they enable you to feel loved and relevant, which greatly impacts longevity.

11. Your Heart Rate Averages 60 Beats/Minute

The resting pulse rate varies from 60 to 100 beats per minute. But according to studies, the lower you fall in that range, the better. A 2010 report from the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) found that a resting heart rate at the low end of that spectrum may offer protection against heart attacks.

The study was based on data from 129,135 postmenopausal women. Researchers found that women with the highest resting heart rates—more than 76 beats per minute—were 26% more likely to have a heart attack or die from one than those with the lowest resting heart rates—62 beats per minute or less.

Why would this be? A lower heart rate at rest is a sign that your heart functions more efficiently and that you have better cardiovascular fitness.

Want to learn how to lower your resting heart rate? Hit that jogging trail! It is not unusual for well-trained athletes to have a normal resting heart rate closer to 40 beats per minute.

12. You Skip the Soda Pop

There is now ample evidence for what the soda industry and high-fructose corn syrup producers have denied for years. Sad but true: Drinking soda makes you fat. According to a study of 43,000 adults and 4,000 adolescents in California, a staggering **62% of adults who drank at least one soda a day were overweight or obese.**

Drinking one (or more) sodas a day increased the chances of being overweight by 27 percent. According to the study, California teens, on average, get 39 pounds of liquid sugar per year just from drinking soda pops; 41 percent of the children and 62 percent of adolescents in the study drank at least one soda per day.

As soda consumption has increased in this country, so has the incidence of obesity. And, with higher obesity rates, of course, increased rates of diabetes, cancer, heart disease, depression, and other chronic diseases that are difficult to treat effectively. Further, soda doesn't just lead to obesity; the phosphoric acid in sodas may cause bone loss and osteoporosis, even in men.

Think again if you think you're off the hook just because you're hooked on diet soda instead of regular pop. Several studies have shown that drinking diet soda on a daily basis strongly predisposes you to Type 2 Diabetes and metabolic syndrome, a cluster of changes linked to both increased risk of diabetes and heart disease. And unfortunately, aspartame (NutraSweet), the most commonly used sweetener in diet soda and other sugar-free products, may be linked to increased brain cancer, migraines, and seizures.

The solution? If you have to get that sugar fix, try products or drinks sweetened with a healthy, low-glycemic alternative like the herb stevia.

If you found value in this quick overview of 12 simple lifestyle changes that can guide you toward a longer, healthier life, we invite you to visit YogaUOnline.com and discover what we have built for you over the last 20 years.

At YogaUOnline, we're a dedicated community committed to sharing the profound healing power of yoga with the world.

We've experienced firsthand how yoga transforms daily life, and we believe that much of the pain and illness we face could be prevented through mindful self-care.

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